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Letter dated 29 September 2009 from the Permanent Representative of Madagascar to the United Nations addressed to the President of the General Assembly

I have the honour to transmit to you the following message from Ny Hasina Andriamanjato, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs of Madagascar:

"Sir,

The delegation of Madagascar would like to make the following comments pursuant to the decision by the General Assembly on 25 September 2009 to deny Madagascar the opportunity to speak during the general debate following a request by the representative of the Democratic Republic of the Congo on behalf of the Southern African Development Community (SADC) not to give the floor to His Excellency Andry Nirina Rajoelina, President of the High Transitional Authority of the Republic of Madagascar.

First of all, as a sovereign Member State of the United Nations, Madagascar was invited by the United Nations Secretary-General (note verbale of 7 July 2009) to the high-level meeting on climate change.

His Excellency Andry Nirina Rajoelina was also invited by the United Nations Secretary-General (letter dated 31 March 2009) to the annual treaty ceremony. On 25 September 2009 he signed the following two treaties:

- Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (New York, 10 December 2008);
- United Nations Convention on Contracts for the International Carriage of Goods Wholly or Partly by Sea (New York, 11 December 2008).

Lastly, like every year, Madagascar, a Member State of the United Nations, was officially invited by the Secretary-General of the United Nations to participate in the general debate of the sixty-fourth session of the General Assembly.

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We were greatly surprised and dismayed when the representative of the Democratic Republic of Congo, a member of SADC, who had not issued the invitation, requested the General Assembly not to give the floor to His Excellency Andry Nirina Rajoelina, head of the Malagsy delegation.

In the name of the very principle of State sovereignty, what right did SADC have to prevent Madagascar from speaking? At that time, the Credentials Committee had not yet submitted its report.

The 2005 World Summit Outcome document was adopted by all world leaders in 2005, but what became of paragraph 5 of its section on values and principles, where the world leaders rededicated themselves to uphold the sovereign equality of all States, respect territorial integrity and political independence, and the principle of non-interference in the internal affairs of States?

With reference to rule 71 of the Rules of Procedure of the General Assembly, the 'question of the representation of Madagascar' was not on the agenda. This was the plenary general debate in which all Member States are invited to participate.

Inasmuch as we are all here in this august Assembly, what do we want and where do we want to go? Among the entirely appropriate themes for this sixty-fourth session, the dialogue of cultures and civilizations is at the heart of our debate.

We are deeply saddened by the attitude of certain friendly countries that wish to exclude and marginalize us. Such an anachronistic approach is unworthy of our times.

We welcome the wise decision of the President of the General Assembly, who requested an opinion of the Legal Counsel authorizing the head of the Madagascar delegation to take the floor.

However, we deplore the result of the vote that pushed aside the majority of Member States. Is this democracy? No one can claim to have a monopoly on good ideas.

We vehemently proclaim that the result of the vote does not represent democracy. The whole world will agree on that.

In no way can the 33 Member States who participated in the vote pretend to embody democracy concerning an issue as sensitive as Madagascar's representation and sovereignty within the United Nations."

I should be grateful if you would circulate the text of the present letter and its annex containing the statement of Andry Nirina Rajoelina as an official document of the sixty-fourth session of the General Assembly (see annex).

(*Signed*) Zina **Andrianarivelo-Razafy**
Ambassador
Permanent Representative

Annex to the letter dated 29 September 2009 from the Permanent Representative of Madagascar to the United Nations addressed to the President of the General Assembly

Statement by Andry Nirina Rajoelina, President of the High Transitional Authority

United Nations General Assembly, sixty-fourth session

New York, 24 September 2009

It is with great pleasure that I speak from the rostrum of the United Nations today representing Madagascar, for which it is a particular honour to be able to contribute to the reflections and deliberations in this highly significant setting.

As we all know, the United Nations is the ideal forum for exchanging our respective experiences and to maintain our solidarity.

In such circumstances, allow me first of all to express my heartfelt thanks to Miguel d'Escoto Brockmann for the excellent way in which he led the sixty-third session of our General Assembly, which allowed us to make progress on various current issues that are necessary and useful for the fulfilment of humanity as a whole.

Allow me, furthermore, to present my warm congratulations on the election of Ali Treki as President of the sixty-fourth session of the General Assembly. I am certain that this august Assembly will adopt pertinent resolutions and decisions under his clear-sighted leadership.

I also wish to salute you, Mr. Secretary-General, for your exceptional and visible ability to react in response to all the crises troubling the world. I can only wish you the greatest success in accomplishing your missions.

This year's theme, "global response to global crises and development through strengthening multilateralism and dialogue of civilizations" perfectly reflects the desire of us all to find a common solution to our common problems.

Our cultural, religious or other differences should in no way constitute a factor in lack of understanding among us, the peoples of this world.

On the contrary, they should provide even greater impetus to guide us towards durable peace and security.

Indeed, our differences lie in the way in which each of us approaches realities, being and events. The resulting points of view are partial, and thus necessarily complement each other.

I join with African leaders in affirming that Africa deserves its place in the community of nations. I also share the view that the common value of democracy we all proclaim would be meaningless if geographical representation were not applied within this Organization. It is a matter of the very legitimacy of the United Nations.

As the world's second most populous continent, Africa should not be excluded from initiatives that concern it.

We support the demand of the President of the African Union and several member States to grant it the right to a permanent seat on the United Nations Security Council with all the associated prerogatives.

We are here to mark the way for future generations and to make concrete our desire to promote dialogue among cultures and civilizations. Let us hold fast to the principles we unanimously adopted in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights that "All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights. They are endowed with reason and conscience and should act towards one another in a spirit of brotherhood."

Allow me to salute all the efforts undertaken to date, at all levels of our international community, for this cause that is dear to us. Nevertheless, much remains to be done, for we are still far from achieving our objectives.

Understanding, rejection of discrimination, and tolerance, religious or otherwise, without which a durable peace will remain a utopian ideal, must be the watchwords in guiding our actions.

They must be our reference points in each decision we take, whether in the political, economic, social or cultural fields.

In that regard, allow me briefly to examine the case of my country, Madagascar, whose situation, it appears to me, embodies a model of society where "we", the youth, must take on an increasingly important role in all decision-making processes.

Sixty-five per cent of the population of Madagascar is under 25 years of age, which is roughly the proportion of youth throughout the world, especially in developing countries.

The world is in the process of searching for a reference point to survive the major challenges it is facing, in particular the economic and financial crisis, climate change, food insecurity and growing poverty.

In Madagascar, these problems, combined with failed governance over the past two decades, inevitably resulted in an acute political and social crisis.

The Malagasy experience speaks to us all, for the youth of Madagascar have taken responsibility.

Being among the youngest Heads of State present at this General Assembly, if not the youngest, I formally call on all the youth of the world to take action against the new challenges facing humanity.

"Let us act in order not to suffer, and change for a better, sustainable world!"

I also appeal to our elders to have confidence in the youth of today and of tomorrow. And I thank the Secretary-General for the relevance of his initiative at his climate change conference, when he involved youth in this struggle for the survival of humanity.

We are speaking out to the whole world because:

We have waited too long for our opportunity to choose;

We have waited too long to attack injustice, the poverty of our countrymen, abuse and drift;

We have waited too long to find real solutions to poor governance which has mired much of humanity in poverty.

To suffering, anguish and despair, we must have one response:

We want to change,

We must change,

We will change.

This is not the first time in 49 years of independence that the Malagasy people have manifested their will for change.

The peaceful movement of the Malagasy people led to the establishment of a Transitional Authority validated by the High Constitutional Court of the Republic of Madagascar.

Unfortunately, some technical and financial partners are threatening sanctions of various types.

We can only regret such threats, which will serve only to increase the suffering of the Malagasy people, for Madagascar still depends on international assistance, and in the end its beneficiaries are the people and not Governments.

Therefore, from this rostrum, we solemnly appeal to the international community, to all donors, to review their reading of the situation and to continue their assistance to the Malagasy people in order to prevent further deterioration in their standard of living.

The principal mission of the transition regime, which is consensual and inclusive, is to draft a new Constitution for the advent of the Fourth Republic in line with the expectations of the Malagasy people. The major principles of this new Constitution will be laid down during a national conference to be organized and conducted by civil society.

We would like to state our commitment to the holding of free, fair, transparent and regular elections as early as possible, on the basis of a new electoral code under the supervision of the Independent Electoral Commission and monitored by international observers.

We greatly hope that the United Nations will accompany us through this electoral process. We request your assistance and support.

Looking towards the International Year for the Rapprochement of Cultures in 2010, the Malagasy people call for international cooperation in favour of all initiatives aimed at promoting a culture of peace and dialogue among all cultures, civilizations and religions. This choice is eminently meaningful as the current crises remind us that all countries of the world are called on to cooperate, especially because of interdependence related to globalization, and that a spirit of dialogue must prevail.

Dialogue assumes equality and mutual respect. Thus, all points of view and proposed solutions deserve to be considered for their worth in order to address the complex crises which are currently raging across our planet. In other words, effective multilateralism through international organizations is at stake, and ideological eclecticism as well as methodological realism must be brought to bear.

Dialogue also requires a spirit of burden-sharing. From this viewpoint, since crises have universal impact, recovery should benefit all and associated strategies must be impartial.

As long as some peoples and actors of the world are underestimated and even excluded, effectiveness will miss the mark.

The promises made at the international conferences on the economic, financial, food and climate crises must be kept. Among them, I would like to cite the promise to allocate 0.7 per cent of the economic recovery plans adopted in rich countries to respond to the immediate needs of peoples suffering from hunger and malnutrition and to guarantee food security for all.

Madagascar is grateful for the support of the international community in its efforts for peace and development, and reaffirms its determination to contribute to our collective reflections in order to solve shared problems.

May the dialogue of civilizations prosper all the nations through a gentler, more humane globalization!